

FORTUNES IN FICTION.

WHAT POPULAR STORY WRITERS EARN BY THEIR PEN.

Gripping Out a Library of Five Cent Literature at the Rate of \$40 Worth Each Day—Salaries of Noted Writers and Editors.

To have pointed out to you "the most popular American author," and then not to recognize him either in the flesh or by any portrait you have seen, is a trifle surprising if you had previously thought you knew the faces and figures of all the American authors you ever heard of. The man who was pointed out stood on a corner near the city hall of Brooklyn, apparently waiting for that carriage which the poorest of us keeps—a horse car. He was a short man of medium build, dressed in a suit of blue serge, wearing a fashionable white straw hat, tilted a little over the ear, and carrying a cane. He looked rather like a shrewd commission merchant or grain broker than like an inspired ward of literature.

"Where Howells never was heard of," said my friend, "where the fame of Longfellow has not yet reached and where Robert Louis Stevenson is as if unborn, that famous author is admired, if not revered. He makes \$15,000 a year by his writings."

Vexed at my ignorance and with my curiosity keenly whetted, I inquired his name only to learn that it was Harland P. Halsey, a name I never had heard in my life. The whole truth was grudgingly delivered by my informant, who at length freed his mind in this wise:

Halsey is the writer who signs the nom de plume "Old South" in one of the popular weeklies. Fifteen years ago he wrote a serial story called "Old South, the Detective," and it achieved a success so great that afterward he adopted the name of the hero for his own pen name, and ever since he has been reeling out stories, always about "Old South," until he has now written something like 200 volumes of this literature. Wide as his circle of fame he desires to widen it by the production of more ambitious literature, and to that end, or as an approach to it, has just finished a temperance tale.

How strange this all is! We have never read of Halsey in the magazine articles upon "the literary movement in New York," have not seen his portrait in similar articles upon the spirits of the Authors' club. Yet he is the leading writer for a paper that boasts of 250,000 circulation and four times that number of readers—1,250,000 a week. It seems quite likely that, as my informant said, "his books are to be found in the cabinets of the locomotives, in the garrets of the sewing girls, in the kitchens of the land, and the factory hands of the average New England mill town would rather see him than Bismarck or Tennyson."

And \$15,000 a year! That is almost \$300 a week. Why, I may be unlearning a secret, but it is none the less a fact that the prices of our novelists, William D. Howells, is paid only \$10,000 a year by Harper & Bros., and he is considered fortunate to get that sum, though in order to do so he had to surrender all claim of earning extra money by means of a contract in which he agrees to give all his gifted creations to that firm. And Rev. Edward P. Ross, poetical favorite of the middle class of novel consumers, the man who is supposed to press one of his metaphorical heels on the neck of the reading community, does not earn a penny more than \$10,000 a year and did not more than begin to make that much until his publishers tried the experiment of printing "Barriers Burned Away" in twenty-cent form in a limited edition of 100,000 volumes. I say "limited" because they destroyed the plates when that number was printed, to force the public to buy the higher priced edition of old (at \$1 a book, I believe) in case it wanted more after the twenty-cent books were sold. This was followed by the same experiments with "He Fell in Love With His Wife," both succeeded perfectly, and now Dominio Ross makes \$10,000 a year.

Who else does as well as that with his pen? Editor Stone of the old Journal of Commerce of this city draws exactly that sum for his salary, but then he controls the paper and pays himself, and he is not a novelist. What novelist makes it? Mr. Mayo W. Haseltine, Anne J. Cunningham, Col. Croker and George Alfred Townsend are credited with earning \$10,000 a year, which is also the salary of more than one of the metropolitan silver-chiefs. This is money made with the pen or with the management of the pen of others, but it is not by novel writing, and it is not \$15,000. Brasher Matthews and Henry C. Barker, the editor of Puck and author of several entertaining books, are credited with \$7,000 or \$7,500. Both could make more if they were not too conscientious and better satisfied to live easily and pleasantly. The nearest claimant for popular favor among novel readers, Mr. Henry Harland, the young lawyer and ex-attache of the surrogate's court, who writes under the name of "Sidney Lusk," has not yet pushed his income up to the \$5,000 mark, but he is very young yet—not more than 30—and he is only making his first bow and showing for the first bouquet shot from the thick of his aspirants.

I have not mentioned the secret of Mr. Halsey's story telling, unless it be that there is an adventure in every 1,000 words, an arrest, a shooting scene, a surprise or a run. But the style is easy to analyze. It is that of the repeating rifle, bang, bang, bang, as fast as you can pull the trigger, with pauses for reloading at the end of each short chapter. It might be called the Gatling gun mode of writing.

It is a sign of the times and a good omen for the country that in this author's works there is no word or suggestion, plot or theme, that could stir an unduly appetite or bring a blush to a pure woman's face. It is not so much a sign of the times that this author is no Bohemian but a solid, practical man of affairs, of family and of high repute. Sylvanus Cobb, Jr., lately departed, was all of this, and he was the king of popular writers, just as Mr. Halsey is now. Cobb never earned more than \$100 a week, but he lived in the country, where such a sum goes a great way. His house was a pleasant cottage, and he drove a horse that Mr. Bonner gave him. He lived well, though modestly, and neither in his life nor works offered a wrong example. —New York Star.

ALL AROUND THE HOUSE.

Favorite House Plants—A Novel Fruit Basket—Bottling Fruit, Etc.

A woman of experience in the window culture of plants says: If obliged to confine myself to one class of plants for this purpose, I would select the dowering begonias. They bear dry heat and occasional neglect as well as any, and are not liable to the attacks of insects, while the number and variety of species is great. Next to begonias I would place geraniums. Every one knows how endless is the variety of shades and forms of these beautiful flowers. There are the scented, the silver leaved, the bronze, the ivy leaved, the tri colored—a charming array. One can have a gay window without any flowers at all.

Attractive Draperies.

A simple but rich cover for a small stand consists of a square of dark maroon plush or velvet edged with gold fringe. Being without lining, it can be easily looped up at intervals around the sides of the table to form a series of graceful festoons that may be held in place with bows of bright gold colored ribbon.

Very satisfactory in the way of inexpensive sash curtains are those made of nice, fine cheese cloth. They can be faced to the depth of three or four inches with turkey red, and worked above this in outline stitch with a border design in bright colored crests. Attached to brass rods, they give a bright and cheery look, very desirable in the cold season. Instead of brass rods, plain iron or wooden rods are made attractive by painting them with the liquid gilding obtainable at any oil and color store.

Sources of Waste in the Kitchen.

Economy counts more rapidly in the kitchen than in any other room in the house. With an untrained cook and inexperienced mistress, waste may go on in a hundred little ways, some of which are enumerated by Table Talk as follows:

Small bits of meat and fish are thrown out, which would make nice meat balls or cutlets. The water in which meats are cooked is thrown away without removing the fat. The water may be used for broth, the fat for frying. Small quantities of pie crust are thrown away instead of making cheese fingers or a few tarts. Cold boiled rice thrown out, that might be added to gums or waffles for the next breakfast. Vegetables thrown out, that might be saved for soup. Baking powders left uncovered to lose their strength. Coffee forgotten and put aside in a paper bag, thereby losing its strength and the grocer condemned for keeping poor coffee. Soap left in the dish water to waste. Scrub brushes the same. Tins and tins put away without drying, to rust. Silver forks used for toasting bread. Knives and forks, the handles soaked off in water. Sour cream thrown out that might be used for cold salad. Cakes left out of vinegar and extract bottles. Apples decaying for want of looking over. As many items more might be added to the list.

Bottling Fruit Whole.

Putting fruit up whole and without sugar, one of the newer modes in vogue, is substantially as follows: Fill clean, dry, wide mouthed bottles with fresh, sound fruit; add nothing, not even water. Be sure that the fruit is well and closely packed in, and ram the corks—of best quality—tightly down into the neck of the bottles until level with the glass. Now tie the corks down tight with strong twine, and after putting the bottles into bags, stand them in a pan or boiler of cold water. Let the water reach not quite to the shoulder of the bottles. Let the fire be moderate and bring the water to boiling. Boil gently for ten minutes, remove from the fire and allow all to cool. Next remove the bottles, wipe them dry and dip the corks in melted resin or bottle wax, taking care to cover every part of the cork. This process is said to keep fruit sound and fresh for years, but housewives in general will prefer to test it well and become familiar with all small details, such as the length of time for boiling different fruits before employing it extensively.

Fresh Parsley in Winter.

A pretty method of growing parsley in the kitchen through the winter is to set some plants in a wire hanging basket lined with moss and suspend it in a sunny window. A few leaves at a time can be nipped off for garnishing and flavoring meats and various dishes, and it will be found quite nice to have the fresh parsley for this purpose. At the same time one has an extremely fresh, bright ornament for the kitchen. In the moist and heated air of a kitchen plants thrive wonderfully, and often surpass in beautiful foliage and bloom those kept in the drier atmosphere of sitting rooms and parlors.

The Refrigerator Well Kept.

Thoroughly clean the refrigerator at least twice every week. This precaution will prevent much loss of food and no little annoyance to the housekeeper.

Cooling Interior Pears.

It is generally a pity to cook fresh fruits; but inferior and hard pears may often be made very palatable by stewing them with a little sugar.

A Good Decorative Material.

Ten cent netting takes gold and silver paint with fine effect, and may be utilized for picture frame units and other decorative purposes.

A Rush Basket for Fruit.

A very attractive receptacle for fruit is the basket represented in the cut, which consists of rushes about fourteen inches long laid close together and held in place with thin flower wire, the basket being shaped by drawing the ends up as tight as may be lined with the wire. The basket may be colored with oil paints or gilded or left plain, as one fancies. The ends are finished with ribbon bows.



A RUSH BASKET.

The rushes to be used for this purpose must be soaked for some time before using in water, and when taken out should be wiped dry with a cloth.

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